



Pelosi Remarks on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act

MARCH 13, 2020

PRESS RELEASE

Washington, D.C. – Speaker Nancy Pelosi delivered remarks on the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Below are the Speaker's remarks as delivered:

Speaker Pelosi. Good afternoon. Over the last several weeks, our nation has been faced with a grave and accelerating challenge, one that tests our compassion, ingenuity and resolve: the coronavirus crisis.

Sadly and prayerfully, we have learned of the tragic deaths of at least 41 Americans from this public health emergency so far.

The American people expect and deserve a coordinated, science-based and whole-of-government response to keep them and their loved ones safe: a response that puts families first to stimulate the economy.

To put families first, last week, the House passed a strong, bipartisan \$8.3 billion emergency funding package of entirely new funds. We made a well-funded, evidence-based investment in public health; in development treatments and the vaccine available to all; in prevention preparedness and response measures and helping state, local, tribal and territorial hospitals and health systems; and in supporting impacted small businesses with SBA loans and helping families by expending telemedicine services no matter where they live.

Democrat's swift action to pass this emergency funding was essential to our nation's long overdue response.

Next, Senate Democratic Leader Schumer and I, last weekend, called for further action to put families first.

Today, we are passing a bill that does just that: the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, which is focused directly on providing support for America's families, who must be our first priority.

The three most important parts of this bill are testing, testing, testing. This legislation facilitates free coronavirus testing for everyone, including the uninsured.

We can only defeat this outbreak if we have an accurate determination of its scale and scope, so that we can pursue the precise, science-based response that is necessary.

To put families first, our legislation secures paid leave with two weeks of paid sick leave and family and medical leave for those affected by the virus.

And for those who lose their jobs, we are strengthening Unemployment Insurance, a critical step to protect workers' economic security.

Putting families first, our legislation protects our children and, particularly, the tens of millions of little children who rely on the free or reduced price lunch they receive at school for their food security.

As schools are being closed, these children will be deprived of their meals. Our bill takes aggressive action to strengthen food security initiatives, including student meals as well as SNAP, seniors' meals and food banks.

As we develop our next steps, we will continue to listen to and benefit from the expertise of scientists, health care professionals, public health officials and community leaders, so that we can craft the most effective, evidence-based response.

Our nation, our great nation has faced crises before. And every time, thanks to the courage and optimism, patriotism and perseverance of the American people, we have prevailed. Now, working together, we will once again prevail and we'll come out stronger than before.

God bless you and God bless America.

Thank you.